

Message Text

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ACTION EUR-12

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TAGS: PGOV, EEC

SUBJECT: EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL NOVEMBER 5-6: DIRECT ELECTION
OF EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

1. BEGIN SUMMARY: THE QUESTION OF THE DIRECT ELECTION OF THE EUROPEAN

PARLIAMENT FIGURED PROMINENTLY IN THE DISCUSSIONS OF THE EC FOREIGN
MINISTERS COUNCIL HELD IN BRUSSELS ON NOVEMBER 5 AND 6. THE FOREIGN
MINISTERS MET WITH A DELEGATION FROM THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (EP) AND
SUBSEQUENTLY EXAMINED A PAPER PREPARED BY THE AD HOC GROUP IN PREPARA-

TION FOR ITS PRESENTATION TO THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL (HEADS OF GOVERNMENT)

WHICH IS TO MEET IN ROME ON DECEMBER 1-2. NO MAJOR SHIFTS OF POSITION

WERE APPARENT FOLLOWING THE COUNCIL SESSION, ALTHOUGH A NUMBER OF
DELEGATIONS EXPRESSED SATISFACTION WITH THE PATIJN REPORT AND SAID
THAT THE MEETING WITH THE EP DELEGATION HAD BEEN "HELPFUL." END SUMMARY.

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2. AT THE EC FOREIGN MINISTERS COUNCIL HELD IN BRUSSELS ON NOVEMBER 5

-6,

THE MINISTERS MET WITH A DELEGATION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT LED BY PRESIDENT GEORGES SPENALE, WHICH INCLUDED THE CHAIRMAN AND VICE CHAIRMAN OF THE POLITICAL AFFAIRS COMMITTEE AND DUTCH EP MEMBER PATIJN, THE GROUP'S RAPPOREUR. THE PARLIAMENTARY DELEGATION PRESENTED ITS STUDY (THE PATIJN REPORT) AND ANSWERED SOME OF THE QUESTIONS OF THE MEMBER STATE REPRESENTATIVES. OUR SOURCES INDICATE THESE QUESTIONS FOCUSED ON FOUR AREAS: THE TARGET DATE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS; THE QUESTION OF DOUBLE MANDATE; WHETHER OR NOT TO HOLD EP ELECTIONS ON THE SAME DATE AS ELECTIONS TO NATIONAL PARLIAMENTS AND THE ISSUE OF DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS IN THE PARLIAMENT.

3. DIRECT ELECTION IMPLEMENTATION DATE: UK FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN ASKED THE PARLIAMENT'S DELEGATION IF THEY THOUGHT THERE WAS SUFFICIENT PREPARATION TIME BETWEEN NOW AND MAY 1978--THE TARGET DATE FOR THE IMPLEMENTATION OF DIRECT ELECTIONS. MR. SPENALE REPLIED THAT, IF A POSITIVE DECISION IS TAKEN AT THE NEXT MEETING OF THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL, THERE WOULD BE MORE THAN TWO YEARS TO PREPARE FOR THE FIRST ROUND OF DIRECT ELECTIONS. THIS, HE THOUGHT, WOULD BE SATISFACTORY. FRG FOREIGN MINISTER GENSCHER REPORTED THAT "IN ALL RESPECTS" THE PATIJN REPORT MET WITH THE APPROVAL OF HIS GOVERNMENT AND OF ALL OF THE FRAKTIONEN IN THE BUNDESTAG. CALLAGHAN SAID HE WAS NOT, AT THE PRESENT TIME, IN A POSITION TO GIVE SUCH AN ASSURANCE ON BEHALF OF THE BRITISH GOVERNMENT. ALTHOUGH HE "PERSONALLY" WOULD RECOMMEND THE LIFTING OF THE UK'S RESERVE. HE SAID IT WOULD BE NECESSARY TO DISCUSS THE PROBLEMS POSED BY DIRECT ELECTIONS--INCLUDING QUESTIONS OF MODIFYING UK LEGISLATION--WITH BOTH THE GENERAL PUBLIC, THE POLITICAL PARTY ORGANIZATIONS, AND WESTMINSTER, BEFORE HMG COULD GIVE SUCH AN ASSURANCE. HE FURTHER INDICATED IT WAS HIS VIEW THAT PRIME MINISTER WILSON WOULD BE UNABLE TO GO BEYOND THIS POSITION AT THE DECEMBER EUROPEAN COUNCIL ALTHOUGH HE (CALLAGHAN) HOPED THAT A MORE POSITIVE RESPONSE COULD BE GIVEN AT THE SPRING EUROPEAN COUNCIL.

4. SPEAKING TO REPORTERS AFTER THE COUNCIL, CALLAGHAN TOOK A LESS OPTIMISTIC LINE SAYING REPEATEDLY THAT WHILE THE BRITISH "WERE NOT BEING OBSTRUCTIVE" A LARGE NUMBER OF ISSUES NEEDED TO BE SETTLED PRIOR TO THE HOLDING OF DIRECT ELECTIONS. HE NOTED LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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THE GERMAN GOVERNMENT HAD HAD "17 YEARS TO MAKE UP THEIR MIND" ON THE ISSUE. CALLAGHAN SAID IT WAS "VERY UNLIKELY" THAT, IN VIEW OF HMG'S DESIRE TO HAVE "A DELIBERATE PROCESS OF DISCUSSION AND DEBATE WITHIN PARLIAMENT, WITHIN THE PARTIES, AND WITH PARTY ORGANIZATION," THE TARGET DATE OF 1978 COULD BE MET. HE REFUSED TO PREDICT WHEN THE PROCESS OF CONSULTATION WITHIN THE UK MIGHT BE COMPLETED AND WOULD NOT SPECULATE AS TO WHAT WOULD BE AN APPROPRIATE TARGET DATE FOR DIRECT ELECTIONS.

5. DOUBLE MANDATE: DANISH MINISTER NORGAARD SAID THAT DENMARK WOULD BE ABLE TO AGREE TO THE PATIJN REPORT PROVIDED THAT MEMBER STATES WOULD HAVE THE OPTION OF A COMPULSORY DOUBLE MANDATE, I.E. THAT BEFORE DANISH MEMBERS COULD BE ELCTED TO THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT

,
THEY WOULD HAVE TO HOLD SEATS IN THE FOOKETING. CALLAGHAN ASKED WHAT THE EXPERIENCE HAD BEEN IN THE "OLDER" MEMBER STATES AND IF THEY THOUGHT THE HOLDING OF DUAL MEMBERSHIP DID NOT PLACE TOO GREAT A BURDEN ON THEIR PARLIAMENTARIANS. WE UNDERSTAND THAT THE RESPONSES MADE MENTION OF DISTANCES BETWEEN THE MEMBER STATE CAPITAL AND THE LOCATIONS OF THE SESSIONS OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT (STRASBOURG AND LUXEMBOURG) BUT THAT, IN GENERAL, IT WAS THOUGHT POSSIBLE TO DO BOTH JOBS SATISFACTORILY.

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6. A SINGLE DATE FOR THE ELECTION OF THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT: DANISH MINISTER NORGAARD ALSO SAID THAT A "CONDITION" FOR DANISH AGREEMENT WOULD BE THAT THE ELECTIONS FOR THE EP WERE HELD ON THE SAME DATE AS THOSE FOR THE FOLKETING. HE REPORTEDLY EXPLAINED TO HIS COLLEAGUES THAT CONSIDERABLE ANTI-EC FEELING REMAINED IN DENMARK AND THAT A SINGLE DATE FOR THE EP ELECTION

WHICH WOULD NO COINCIDE WITH NATIONAL ELECTION DATES, COULD MEAN EITHER A LOW TURN-OUT OR A CONCERTED CAMPAIGN BY ANTI-EC FORCES IN CONNECTION WITH THE EP ELECTION. NO CONCLUSIONS WERE REACHED ON THIS SUBJECT, HOWEVER, AT HIS POST-COUNCIL PRESS CONFERENCE

ITALIAN FOREIGN MINISTER AND COUNCIL PRESIDENT RUMOR SUGGESTED THE POSSIBILITY OF GIVING MEMBER STATE GOVERNMENTS THE OPTION AS TO WHEN TO HOLD EP ELECTIONS.

7. NATIONAL REPRESENTATION IN THE EP: IRISH FOREIGN MINISTER FITZGERALD INTERVENED "FORCEFULLY" FURING DISCUSSIONS OF THE SIZE OF THE EXPANDED EP. FITZGERALD NOTED THAT UNDER THE PLAN PROPOSED IN THE PATIJN REPORT, IRELAND WOULD RECEIVE 13 SEATS IN THE 350-SEAT PARLIAMENT. FITZGERALD POINTED OUT THAT ONE OF THE ARGUMENTS SUCCESSFULLY EMPLOYED DURING THE IRSIH REFERENDUM LIMITED OFFICIAL USE

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WAS THAT, DESPITE HER COMPARATIVELY SMALL SIZE, IRELAND RECEIVED FIVE PERCENT OF THE SEATS OF THE EP. UNTIL SUCH TIME AS THE EP MOVED TO A BICAMERAL SYSTEM, IT WAS THE IRISH GOVERNMENT'S POSITION THAT IT WOULD BE UNFAIR TO ALLOT THEM FEWER THAN FIVE PERCENT OF THE SEATS OF THE EXPANDED EP. (ONE SOURCE HAS TOLD US THAT IN RESPONSE TO FITZGERALD'S STATEMENT THE GERMAN DELEGATION POINTED OUT THAT UNDER THE PATIJN REPORT LUXEMBOURG (POPULATION 350,000) RECEIVED SIX SEATS. IF THIS FORMULA WERE TO BE STRICTLY APPLIED GERMANY WOULD RECEIVE MORE THAN 1,000 SEATS.) NO DECISION WAS TAKEN, AND THE QUESTION OF DISTRIBUTION OF SEATS FOLLOWING DIRECT ELECTIONS IS TO BE DISCUSSED AT THE EUROPEAN COUNCIL.

8. COMMISSION REACTION: DURING A CONVERSATION WITH CHARGE ON NOVEMBER 7, EC COMMISSION SECRETARY GENERAL NOEL SAID HE WAS ENCOURAGED BY THE STAND TAKEN BY UK FOREIGN SECRETARY CALLAGHAN DURING THE COUNCIL. NOEL PREDICTED THAT WILSON WOULD MAKE A "FAIRLY POSITIVE" STATEMENT ON DIRECT ELECTIONS AND WOULD FOLLOW UP BY LIFTING THE BRITISH RESERVE AT THE SPRING EUROPEAN COUNCIL. NOEL ALSO SAID HE THOUGHT THE DANES COULD BE PERSUADED TO DROP THEIR DEMAND FOR SIMULTANEOUS ELECTIONS TO THEIR NATIONAL PARLIAMENT AND THE EUROPEAN PARLIAMENT, PROVIDED THEY WERE PERMITTED TO MAKE MEMBERSHIP IN THE FOLKETING A PREREQUISITE FOR EP CANDIDACY. MORRIS

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